



[4910-13-P]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

14 CFR Part 39

[Docket No. FAA-2017-0619; Product Identifier 2016-SW-093-AD]

RIN 2120-AA64

Airworthiness Directives; AgustaWestland S.p.A. Helicopters

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM).

SUMMARY: We propose to adopt a new airworthiness directive (AD) for AgustaWestland S.p.A. (AgustaWestland) Model AW189 helicopters. This proposed AD would require inspecting the tail gearbox (TGB) fitting for a crack. This proposed AD is prompted by a report of a crack on a TGB fitting that was found during a scheduled inspection. The actions of this proposed AD are intended to prevent an unsafe condition on these products.

DATES: We must receive comments on this proposed AD by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

ADDRESSES: You may send comments by any of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Docket: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for sending your comments electronically.
- Fax: 202-493-2251.

- Mail: Send comments to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590-0001.

- Hand Delivery: Deliver to the “Mail” address between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Examining the AD Docket

You may examine the AD docket on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating Docket No. FAA-2017-0619; or in person at Docket Operations between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. The AD docket contains this proposed AD, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD, the economic evaluation, any comments received, and other information. The street address for Docket Operations (telephone 800-647-5527) is in the ADDRESSES section. Comments will be available in the AD docket shortly after receipt.

For service information identified in this proposed rule, contact Leonardo S.p.A. Helicopters, Matteo Ragazzi, Head of Airworthiness, Viale G.Agusta 520, 21017 C.Costa di Samarate (Va) Italy; telephone +39-0331-711756; fax +39-0331-229046; or at <http://www.leonardocompany.com/-/bulletins>. You may review the referenced service information at the FAA, Office of the Regional Counsel, Southwest Region, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy, Room 6N-321, Fort Worth, TX 76177.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Matt Fuller, Senior Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email matthew.fuller@faa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Comments Invited

We invite you to participate in this rulemaking by submitting written comments, data, or views. We also invite comments relating to the economic, environmental, energy, or federalism impacts that might result from adopting the proposals in this document. The most helpful comments reference a specific portion of the proposal, explain the reason for any recommended change, and include supporting data. To ensure the docket does not contain duplicate comments, commenters should send only one copy of written comments, or if comments are filed electronically, commenters should submit only one time.

We will file in the docket all comments that we receive, as well as a report summarizing each substantive public contact with FAA personnel concerning this proposed rulemaking. Before acting on this proposal, we will consider all comments we receive on or before the closing date for comments. We will consider comments filed after the comment period has closed if it is possible to do so without incurring expense or delay. We may change this proposal in light of the comments we receive.

Discussion

EASA, which is the Technical Agent for the Member States of the European Union, has issued EASA AD No. 2016-0177, dated September 8, 2016, to correct an unsafe condition for Leonardo Helicopters (formerly Finmeccanica S.p.A. and AgustaWestland) Model AW189 helicopters with a tail assembly part number (P/N) 8G5350A00131.

EASA advises that a crack was detected on the TGB fitting P/N 4F5350A04152 during a scheduled inspection of an AW189 helicopter. EASA advises that this condition, if not detected and corrected, could lead to crack propagation up to a critical length. This condition could reduce the assembly's ability to sustain loads from the TGB and tail rotor, possibly resulting to reduced helicopter control. The EASA AD consequently requires repetitive inspections of the fitting and replacing the fitting, depending on the inspections' outcome. EASA considers these actions to be interim and that further AD action may follow.

The FAA is in the process of updating AgustaWestland's name changes to Finmeccanica S.p.A., and then to Leonardo Helicopters, on its FAA type certificate. Because this name change is not yet effective, this AD specifies AgustaWestland.

FAA's Determination

These helicopters have been approved by the aviation authority of Italy and are approved for operation in the United States. Pursuant to our bilateral agreement with Italy, EASA, its technical representative, has notified us of the unsafe condition described in its AD. We are proposing this AD because we evaluated all known relevant information and determined that an unsafe condition is likely to exist or develop on other products of the same type design.

Related Service Information Under 1 CFR part 51

Leonardo Helicopters has issued Bollettino Tecnico No. 189-114, dated September 6, 2016 (BT), which specifies inspecting the TGB fitting within 30 flight hours or 1 month from the receipt of the BT, whichever comes first, and then at intervals not to exceed 150 flight hours. If a crack is found, the BT requires replacing the TGB

fitting.

This service information is reasonably available because the interested parties have access to it through their normal course of business or by the means identified in the ADDRESSES section.

Proposed AD Requirements

This proposed AD would require within 30 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 150 hours TIS, cleaning the areas around the Hi-lok holes and inspecting the TGB fitting for a crack. If a crack exists, this proposed AD would require replacing the part before the next flight.

Differences between this Proposed AD and the EASA AD

The EASA AD requires you to provide a compliance record and return parts to Leonardo Helicopters if a crack is found on the fitting. This proposed AD would require no such actions.

Interim Action

We consider this proposed AD to be an interim action. The design approval holder is expected to develop a modification that will address the unsafe condition identified in this AD. Once this modification is developed, approved, and available, we might consider additional rulemaking.

Costs of Compliance

We estimate that this AD affects 4 helicopters of U.S. Registry and that labor costs average \$85 per work-hour. Based on these estimates, we expect the following costs:

- Inspecting the TGB fitting would require 4 work-hours and no parts for a cost

per helicopter of \$340 and \$1,360 for the U.S. fleet each inspection cycle.

- Replacing the TGB fitting would require 48 work-hours and parts would cost \$30,000 for a cost of \$34,080 per helicopter.

According to Leonardo Helicopters' service information, some of the costs of this AD may be covered under warranty, thereby reducing the cost impact on affected individuals. We do not control warranty coverage by Leonardo Helicopters. Accordingly, we have included all costs in our cost estimate.

Authority for This Rulemaking

Title 49 of the United States Code specifies the FAA's authority to issue rules on aviation safety. Subtitle I, section 106, describes the authority of the FAA Administrator. "Subtitle VII: Aviation Programs," describes in more detail the scope of the Agency's authority.

We are issuing this rulemaking under the authority described in "Subtitle VII, Part A, Subpart III, Section 44701: General requirements." Under that section, Congress charges the FAA with promoting safe flight of civil aircraft in air commerce by prescribing regulations for practices, methods, and procedures the Administrator finds necessary for safety in air commerce. This regulation is within the scope of that authority because it addresses an unsafe condition that is likely to exist or develop on products identified in this rulemaking action.

Regulatory Findings

We determined that this proposed AD would not have federalism implications under Executive Order 13132. This proposed AD would not have a substantial direct effect on the States, on the relationship between the national Government and the States,

or on the distribution of power and responsibilities among the various levels of government.

For the reasons discussed, I certify this proposed regulation:

1. Is not a “significant regulatory action” under Executive Order 12866;
2. Is not a “significant rule” under the DOT Regulatory Policies and Procedures (44 FR 11034, February 26, 1979);
3. Will not affect intrastate aviation in Alaska to the extent that it justifies making a regulatory distinction; and
4. Will not have a significant economic impact, positive or negative, on a substantial number of small entities under the criteria of the Regulatory Flexibility Act.

We prepared an economic evaluation of the estimated costs to comply with this proposed AD and placed it in the AD docket.

List of Subjects in 14 CFR Part 39

Air transportation, Aircraft, Aviation safety, Incorporation by reference, Safety.

The Proposed Amendment

Accordingly, under the authority delegated to me by the Administrator, the FAA proposes to amend 14 CFR part 39 as follows:

PART 39 - AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES

1. The authority citation for part 39 continues to read as follows:

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

§ 39.13 [Amended]

2. The FAA amends § 39.13 by adding the following new airworthiness directive (AD):

AgustaWestland S.p.A.: Docket No. FAA-2017-0619; Product Identifier 2016-SW-093-AD.

(a) Applicability

This AD applies to AgustaWestland S.p.A. Model AW189 helicopters, certificated in any category, with tail assembly part number 8G5350A00131 installed.

(b) Unsafe Condition

This AD defines the unsafe condition as a crack on a tail gearbox fitting. This condition could reduce the tail assembly's ability to sustain loads from the tail rotor gearbox (TGB) and the tail rotor and result in loss of helicopter control.

(c) Comments Due Date

We must receive comments by [INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE Federal Register].

(d) Compliance

You are responsible for performing each action required by this AD within the specified compliance time unless it has already been accomplished prior to that time.

(e) Required Actions

Within 30 hours time-in-service (TIS) and thereafter at intervals not to exceed 150 hours TIS, clean and inspect the TGB fitting for a crack in the areas depicted in Figure 1 of Leonardo Helicopters Bollettino Tecnico No. 189-114, dated September 6, 2016. If there is a crack, replace the TGB fitting before further flight.

(f) Alternative Methods of Compliance (AMOCs)

(1) The Manager, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch, FAA, may approve AMOCs for this AD. Send your proposal to: Matt Fuller, Senior

Aviation Safety Engineer, Safety Management Section, Rotorcraft Standards Branch,
FAA, 10101 Hillwood Pkwy., Fort Worth, TX 76177; telephone (817) 222-5110; email
9-ASW-FTW-AMOC-Requests@faa.gov.

(2) For operations conducted under a 14 CFR part 119 operating certificate or under 14 CFR part 91, subpart K, we suggest that you notify your principal inspector, or lacking a principal inspector, the manager of the local flight standards district office or certificate holding district office before operating any aircraft complying with this AD through an AMOC.

(g) Additional Information

The subject of this AD is addressed in European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) AD No. 2016-0177, dated September 8, 2016. You may view the EASA AD on the Internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> by searching for and locating it in Docket No. FAA-2017-0619.

(h) Subject

Joint Aircraft Service Component (JASC) Code: 6520, Tail Rotor Gearbox.

Issued in Fort Worth, Texas, on February 12, 2018.

Scott A. Horn,

Deputy Director for Regulatory Operations,
Compliance & Airworthiness Division,
Aircraft Certification Service.

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